

# ADEQUATE FUNDING OF TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION: A PANACEA FOR THE ATTAINMENT OF NATIONAL ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (NEEDS).

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## Abstract

*Technology Education by its nature is very expensive, characterised by huge capital expenditure for acquiring and maintaining the most needed equipment, routine supply of needed training materials and supervised work experience among others. This paper highlights the importance of adequate funding of technology education for sustainable National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (NEEDS) programme. Recommendations as a way forward were proffered.*

## Introduction

Several authors have defined technology education in different ways. Technology education refers to the systematic application of knowledge to practical skills in industry. Technology education has been identified as breeding ground for the nation's development potentialities. Actualisation of these development potentialities depends upon a number of factors, foremost of which is finance (kurya 2001). Adequacy and availability of funds is what make possible the supply of all needed resources for the proper implementation of technology education policies and programmes. Funding in education generally implies the provision of necessary facilities or finance and the provision of adequate materials, equipment, tools and good environment for learning. Funding in technology education varies slightly from general education in that technology education requires special attention in all its constituents. This ranges from the teachers and their training, provision of materials, tools and conducive environment for learners.

However, Ayewon (2001:15) commented "Most economists conceptualise poverty in purely economic terms, as a condition of inadequate economic resources to meet the basic necessities of life, such as food, clothing, shelter as well as basic social infrastructure like transportation, water, sanitation, electricity, education and health requirements. For National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy to meet its objectives and goals of wealth creation, employment generation, poverty reduction and values re-orientation, technology education need to be encouraged and finance adequately.

## What Is Needs

National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) is Nigeria's homegrown poverty reduction Strategy (PRSP). It is a plan on ground and founded on a clear vision, sound values and enduring principles. It is a medium term strategy but which drives from country's long-term goals of poverty reduction. Needs rest on four key strategies, these are; reforming the way government works and its institutions; growing the private sector;

implementing a social charter for the people; and re-orientation of people with an enduring Africa value system (NEEDS, 2004).

#### TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION AND ATTAINMENT OF NEEDS

Economic empowerment has a positive relationship with the level of skill possessed and utilised. Sound and functional technology education result in increase creativity, innovations; efficient and effective use of resources, which improve capacity utilisation of industries, consequently, employment generation and capital accumulation. Technology education forms the basis for innovative thinking and creativeness. Ajetunmobi (1995) in Abokede (2000:66) opined that vocational and technical education provide the requirement for trained manpower, technical knowledge and skill necessary for industrial, agricultural, commercial and economic development. It is however important to note that the quality of technological development of any nation dictates its strength, growth and weakness of her development plans, be it economic, political, social, and military advancement.

Technology education is aimed at producing the manpower that will apply the acquired knowledge towards improvement and solution in their natural and environmental problems, thus making the environment more useful and convenient for man. Nurturing an education system that drives the total development of the individual and in particular at the physical, intellectual, moral and spiritual realms. For the goals of NEEDS to be fulfilled technology education need to be funded adequately and encouraged.

#### Adequate Funding Of Technology Education For Attainment Of Needs

The success of any programme depends upon the availability of resources needed by such programme. Money must be adequate being the most important of all the resources because without money all other resources cannot be provided. Funding of technology education has been difficult partly because of their capital intensive nature which is due to high demand for equipment and specialised manpower, need for continuous research and development acquisition of equipment, based on changing technology, construction and maintenance of infrastructure, funding of students practical experience schemes, staff development programmes and activities, repairs, rehabilitation and refurbishing of equipment and tools etc (Ibigbami, 200:98). Hence much fund is needed for efficient and effective technological education programme, which form the basis for skill acquisition a necessary step for attainment of the goals of NEEDS. Adeleye (2000), identified inadequate funding as one of the constraints on technical/vocational training in Nigeria as a means of eradicating poverty.

Adegun (2001) states that human capital development is the pivot on which national development is hinged. Isyaku (1997) observed that technical/vocational education suffers some problems that have limited its effective contribution. This problem include inadequate funding, leading to inadequate teaching facilities and shortage of laboratory and workshop equipment, shortage of qualified teachers at all level of public attitude. Success or failure of NEEDS will ultimately be determined by availability of funds for the adequate supply of infrastructural facilities, equipment and their maintenance, personnel in form of teachers and technicians, financing of students/trainees practical schemes, research and development, prompt release of funds etc. The step government should take to eradicate poverty and attainment of the objectives of NEEDS is to consider above factors as they relate to technical/vocational education.



### Conclusion And Recommendations

It is pertinent to state that the situation of technology education in Nigeria call sustained and concerted efforts by the stakeholders in other to achieve their landible objectives. All regimes experienced in Nigeria at one time or the other either directly or indirectly have made efforts to alleviate poverty amongst its citizenry. Though it has been the subject of interest to successive governments, financial development institutions and professional bodies, most of the schemes have failed or could not yield the desired result for reasons that are rightly connected with inadequate or poor funding, discontinuity and unsustainable projects. There is no doubt that the nascent democracy can only 'grow' in a society that adequately fund her technology education as this will affect her Social, Economic, Political, Industrial and Technological development. Agreeing with this Asa and Uzochukwu (2000) states, "the adequacy of finding technology education will go along way to determine the self-sufficiency and technological development of our nation. To achieve the landible objectives and goals of National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS), adequate funding of technical/vocational education that has the potentialities of solving economic problems as well as making the citizens to be self employed thereby curtailing the ever increasing rate of unemployment is the only means which poverty can be eradicated.

Based on the foregoing, the following recommendations for adequate finding of technical/vocational education for sustainable National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (NEEDS) are outlined.

- i. All funds allocated to education should not be diverted to other means and corruption of whatever type should be discouraged. And at the same time, educational administrators should ensure prudence in the disbursement of funds allocated to technology education institutions.
- ii. The administration of vocational/technical education should, as matter of urgency should be separated from science and general education.
- iii. Government should ensure adequate and prompt supply of equipment, tools and expendable/consumables for training in technical/vocational schools.
- iv. Funding of education should be given a national priority, As a matter of fact, funding guidelines draw by UNESCO of 26% of Annual budget be adopted.
- v. Opportunities for staff to undergo special refresher courses within or outside their institutions should be provided so that, teachers in particular could "Teach (their) very best" (Otala and Opali, 2002). Similarly opportunities for undertaking research and publication of the outcome should be provided for.
- vi. Government should contact NGOS, International tenor institutions and wealthy Nigerians to assist meaningfully in terms of aids on technical/vocational education programmes.

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